

For some time I've been trying to acquire the services of a professional artist to produce at least one sketch of Efran and Minka for my Abbey Lands chapters. Failing in this, but equipped with Google and Gimp, I decided to do it myself.

This resulted in 12-hour workdays over the last week, punctuated with mild profanity and a lot of self-castigation. I also used no professional-quality images. Since I don't know what I'm doing, I decided to start simple with a grayscale illustration.

So for Efran's face, I used Michelangelo's Christ in *The Last Judgment*. I had to flatten Christ's perfect European nose and broaden the tip a bit, as well as procure a black wig from online. For Minka, I used Pierre Olivier Joseph Coomans' *Portrait of a Young Woman*. Minka's curls came from a sales site as well. (Thumbnails of both paintings are below.) I looked at images of hundreds of dresses before finding one whose model was correctly posed, and then cartoonized it to match Efran's uniform, created from sketches overlaid with numerous paint layers, as well as denim and linen.

The well was built from a stone wall at my apartment complex, and the meadow and trees came from a field across from the local high school. The result is FAR from professional, and I keep finding things that need correcting. (I repeatedly edit my writing, too). But now that I have something I'm satisfied with, I'm trying to figure out how to do another.

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